

MAY 13 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, CIA Career Service Board

SUBJECT : Process of Selecting New Career Employees

REFERENCE : Memo dtd 29 Apr 53 for Chairman, DD/A CSB fr Chair-  
man, CIA CSB, same subject

1. Comment from this Office with respect to the report of the Professional Selection Panel forwarded with the referenced memorandum is furnished without prior referral to the Deputy Director (Administration) Career Service Board, since organization of the Board has not been completed.

2. The Panel's report states that "certain basic changes in policies governing career employees are necessary if the Agency's career program is to be effective. Until these basic changes are made it is unrealistic to develop a detailed procedure for selecting career employees." The Panel's conclusions as documented in paragraphs 3a through 3f of its report fail to develop the content of such basic changes in sufficient form to allow more than the most general observations.

3. It is difficult to perceive that the principles reviewed in paragraphs 3a through 3e comprise the basic changes referred to in the Panel's report. For example, Agency appointments of staff employees are currently made on a trial-service basis. Each supervisor now has the responsibility for determining whether trial-service personnel have qualifications which make them suitable for career employment. To expand the trial-service period from the present duration of one year to the proposed two-year period appears to this Office to be inadvisable for the following reasons:

a. Generally personality traits and characteristics as well as caliber of performance can be adequately appraised to determine career suitability by the alert supervisor during an individual's first year of employment. It is believed that this generalization holds true even in cases of personnel who spend as much as six to nine months in preparatory training before reporting for assignment to a specific supervisory official.

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b. Establishment of a two-year period would almost certainly adversely affect the Agency's recruitment program. The duration of trial-service or probationary periods of twelve months follows a pattern now well recognized in both public and private employment. To inform prospective employees that their career employment in CIA would be confirmed only after the lapse of two years might conceivably discourage many persons who would feel that their interest in CIA service was unreasonably taxed when weighed against the possibility that they would have to look for a new career field at the end of the two-year period.

4. Paragraph 3f proposes that "The final determination of suitability for career employment . . . shall, for employees in professional positions, be made by a special selection process." The "special selection process" is not defined. However, it is understood that the Panel has discussed the possibility of setting up examining panels of senior Agency officials to review the suitability of trial-service personnel for career employment. If this is contemplated, this Office questions the validity of any process which would replace a fundamental responsibility of line officials and allocate authority for this decision in a body which exists outside the direct line of organizational responsibility. To do so would be to deprive supervisory personnel of the authority they must have if, in turn, they can be held properly accountable for performing the missions entrusted to them.

5. For the reasons reviewed in the foregoing paragraphs, this Office cannot concur in the proposals presented by the Professional Selection Panel. It is recognized that refinements in the Agency's processes of selecting personnel are needed to obtain the most competent body of career personnel. At this stage it is felt that there is a particularly strong need to indoctrinate supervisory personnel of their responsibility for using the trial-service period to eliminate personnel whose performance and conduct suggest that they do not measure up to the requirements for long-term employment.

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L. K. WHITE  
Assistant Deputy Director  
(Administration)

SA/DDA:DCK:jeb

cc: DD/A chrono

DD/A subject "Committee--Career Service" (w/ref memo)

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